




Project PLAY



University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
Department of Family and Preventive Medicine,
Research & Evaluation Division

With support from:





Supporting Families and Providers of
Children in the Early Years


About expulsion...

- ▶ **Expulsion rates are higher:**
 - Private and faith-based child care
 - High teacher-child ratios
 - High teacher stress / frustration
 - Long school days
- ▶ There are **no quick fixes.**
- ▶ **Reality in the classroom:** Behaviors are hard to manage, disrupt class, can be unsafe, cause hard feelings between teachers and parents

Project PLAY can help!



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Positive Learning for Arkansas' Youngest

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC)

Goals:

- Enhance the capacity of teachers to prevent and manage social-emotional problems in children.
- Increase nurturing teaching strategies
- Reduce child misbehavior & teacher stress
- Promote home – school consistency
- Reduce problem behaviors & expulsion

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A 6 Month Partnership

Positive Learning for Arkansas' Youngest

- ▶ Visits once or twice a week by a mental health professional with specialized EC training.
- ▶ A combination of trainings, observation, thinking together about problems, and consulting on techniques to enhance teacher capacity and program teamwork.
- ▶ Programmatic or Child Specific

ECMHC work with teacher and directors on things they would like to improve. Even small things can make a difference.


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Overview of the Need

Positive Learning for Arkansas' Youngest

- ▶ 10-20% of prek children have challenging behavior
- ▶ PreK children are expelled at 3x the rate of K-12
- ▶ Boys are 3.5 x more likely to be expelled
- ▶ African American boys expelled twice as often



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Locations of Project PLAY consultants




▶ 6

**2011 Project PLAY Initiative:
Children in Foster Care**

- ▶ Foster children are priority for DCCECE
- ▶ Educational outreach for children in foster care
 - Promote child care **quality & stability** for children in foster care
 - Prioritize centers serving children in foster care
 - Provide educational outreach to stakeholders

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Trauma & Attachment



- ▶ Children entering foster care have experienced the trauma of abuse or neglect.
 - ▶ Low quality child care can be yet **one more stressor or trauma** for a young child
- ▶ Developing secure attachments
 - ▶ a challenge for foster children.
 - ▶ We know stable family relationships promote secure attachment, but sometimes forget about **relationships in the child care setting**.

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We asked child care directors about their concerns

- ▶ Frequent child care moves
- ▶ Frequent disruptions to daily routine
- ▶ Communication gap between child care and child welfare staff
- ▶ Multiple 'decision-makers' about child care, but **most often** the foster parent
- ▶ Child care staff in need of training and support

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What if child care – child welfare partnered could be strengthened?

The child care center was a safe-haven when home life has been disrupted – a place where the child could count on a predictable routine and familiar caregiver?

The child care center was a place where developmental delays were quickly identified and children received the support they need to be successful?

Teachers understood the unique challenges facing foster children and were equipped to build social skills and handle challenging behaviors in a positive way?

Teachers, parents, and child welfare staff worked together to address the needs of the child and ensure consistency between home and school?

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Arkansas....a snapshot of the last quarter of 2015

- ▶ 4418 children in foster care
- ▶ 45% in Family foster homes; 11% residential; 7% therapeutic foster homes
- ▶ Children under 6 years of age:
 - ▶ 46% of all children in foster care
 - ▶ 26% - 3 or more placements in past 12 months

<http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dcfs/Pages/StateFederal-Reports.aspx>


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Educational Outreach: Quality and Stability in Child Care Placement

Our message:


Science tells us children have better outcomes (cognitive, social-emotional) when they attend quality child care and their placement is stable.

- ▶ This is especially true for vulnerable children such as those in foster care
- ▶ Stable relationships with caring adults (including child care providers) support brain development.



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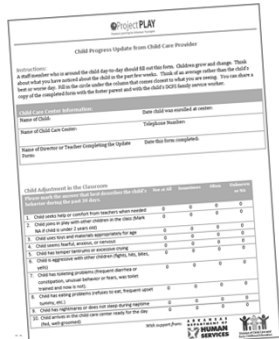
Child Care & Child Welfare Partnership Toolkit



Download the Toolkit from our website:
www.projectplay.uams.edu

Project Play


Child Progress Update



...from Child Care Provider:

Used to provide feedback to the caseworker or court about the child's progress in your classroom. You see the child every day. Your feedback is important!

Communication Toolkit

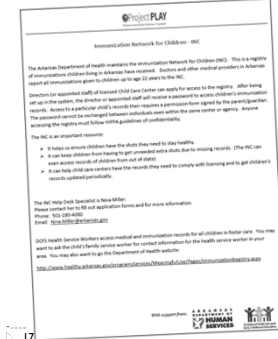


Developed in support with DCFS leadership

Voluntary – being piloted by ECMHC and others


You are welcome to use; make copies

Immunization Network for Children:



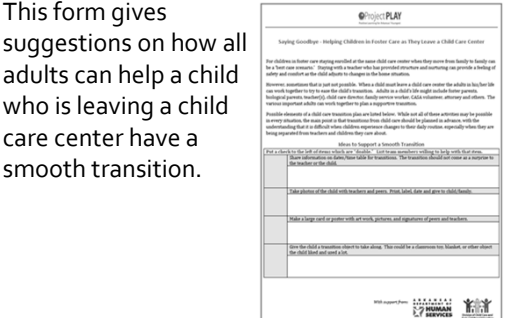
This piece provides information on how to obtain immunization records through the Health Department.

Child Care Center and Child Welfare Information Exchange



- ▶ Provider contact
- ▶ Child/family history
- ▶ Continuing 2-way communication
- ▶ Transitions and scheduling for the child


Saying Goodbye:



This form gives suggestions on how all adults can help a child who is leaving a child care center have a smooth transition.

Our message about Quality & Stability

- ▶ There are many components of quality care.
- ▶ The most important is how the teacher interacts with the children.
- ▶ Stable, **nurturing caregiving** is the foundation of a quality classroom.



Cover the clip words

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Teachers & Directors – Support for Children in Foster Care

- ▶ **Know that you are a team member**
 - ▶ Remember confidentiality (need to know only)
- ▶ **Work to enhance high quality at your facility**
 - ▶ Better Beginnings
 - ▶ Staff training; ECMHC (Project PLAY)
- ▶ **Use the toolkit to increase communication**
 - ▶ Family service workers
 - ▶ Parents – foster and/or bio
 - ▶ CASA
- ▶ **Provide extra nurturing and patience**

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For more information...

Project PLAY
Positive Learning for Arkansas' Youngest
www.projectplay.uams.edu

Teri Patrick, M.Ed
501-218-6328
501-686-7621

Thank you for all you do for children and families!

UAMS
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES
With support from:

Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

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